244 there is the striped mouse, Mus pulchellus Gray (zŏfó III), which gnaws the nuts. A kind of black rot affects the nuts here and there during certain years. A number of caterpillar species which consume the leaves can scarcely be designated as actual pests. It 244 is probable that the black rot has led the women to the belief that 789 other women are capable of making their groundnuts sick and of ruining them by means of "medicine." They try to counter this trick with a medicine consisting of the bones of the turtle, the elephant, the pig, and the guib, which are burned to ashes and then crushed; it is scattered on the seeds before planting. Of the remaining medicines that are supposed to influence favorably the growth of groundnuts, the most important one consists of rubbing [386 the groundnuts with a specially prepared coloring made from red 824] wood, ba-ayắ; accordingly, this medicine is called ba-ayá́. This red coloring (see Section 18, "Sexual Life") produces the [822] desired results and fends off hostile intentions. Red is everywhere the color of joy, growth, and reproduction. On the day the woman plants the groundnuts, she paints a line between her index finger and thumb with the "medicinal red" which will give her a lucky hand; or she draws a similar line on the upper surface of a tree stump and covers the stump with leaves, like a cap. This is to say: "May you groundnuts blossom, grow, and thrive (the red color is for this) under such a protection (referring to the leaves); nobody will be able to do you any harm (referring to the [833] medicine)." Furthermore, on the eve of sowing, the man usually sets a good example for the groundnuts "assembled" in the basket /91/ by performing coitus for their benefit. With this example he sends them on their way: "Multiply! (1)" Another

[841 834]

1. This is done even when the woman is menstruating, whereas sexual intercourse is otherwise avoided during this period. In this case, as a medicinal act, sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman is supposed to be particularly good for the groundnuts, on condition that the woman "brings good luck (avŭe)" (see Section 18, "Sexual Life").

Another
244 789 fertility medicine consists of the following mixture: 1) bark
[824] of the Simarubacea Irvingia barteri Hook. f. (andŏk; 2) bark
bark of the Anacardiacea Pseudospondias microcarpa (Rich.) Engl.
(ofŏs); 3) elephant manure; 4) sand from the Campo or the
Uelle; 5) salt. On the eve of sowing this mixture is added to the
nuts. This, too, must be understood as a direct transfer of power:
the groundnuts are to be as numerous as the fruits of the two
plants named; they are to become as enormous as the pile of
elephant manure; as numerous as sand in the Campo — we would
say, as the sands of the ocean; and as innumerable as the grains
[824] of salt. Finally, certain Liliaceae (ayăn) are planted between
the groundnuts so that their leaves may become as green as the
lilies in the field. As can be seen, there is no lack of friendly
encouragement and good examples.

The fruit, illustrated in cross-section by Plate 6, Draw-
244 ings a and b, usually has two seeds, more rarely three, and still
more rarely one. Something reminiscent of our love feast occurs
when a boy at work finds a fruit with three seeds in his mother's
basket or in the field, calls his friends, and shares the seeds with
[795] them. This is called euphemistically: bi kī kăbăd, "we dissect a
goat." Thus, we have here the doctrine: Do not forget to do good
and to share with your fellow man when you are living in abun-
dance! It is probably more by way of a game that the Pangwe,
especially the children, sometimes eat the nuts raw. Otherwise
[353] raw nuts are prepared principally for soup or compote. It is also
customary to boil the whole fruit and then eat the seeds. The
[367] nuts are stored in large, tall baskets of raffia pith, which are hung
under the roof or placed on a bed, or the nuts may be placed
loose on the groundnut loft, akăn owŭnŏ.

433 As a result of their laziness and indifference, the Pangwe
435 seldom have enough groundnuts, so there is always a period of
244 time when they have to do without them until the next harvest has
been brought in and is sufficiently dried. This is the reason that
in the Ntum and Fang regions at these times the price for a "plate"
(2)

[804] 2. The flat plate-shaped baskets
called bush plates are a unit of
measurement.

252 Everybody rushes to gather up the seeds; even hobbling old men and little naked children eagerly take part. Great care is taken, however, to get none of the dust which covers the village square in great quantities, no matter how much sweeping is done. Ordinarily, however, the seeds are gathered very quietly and slowly in the late afternoon, all the more slowly since the loam of which I have already spoken is carefully removed from the seeds. The fear of surprise downpours, incidentally, has produced all kinds of preventive medicines which I shall describe in another place (Section 14). /97/

244 136 Ngon suffer from pests more than the groundnut. Among these are beetles and caterpillars, but above all a species of bug which feeds on the leaves and a number of mammals which feed on the fruit. Among these mammals should be mentioned especially the red-tailed monkey, Cercopithecus buccalis Leconte (o̍s̍o̍k), and, wherever it occurs, the baboon, Maimon planirostris Elliot (esi ge); furthermore, from the family of squirrels there are Sciurus eborivorus Du Chaillu (mvo̍k) and Sciurus lemniscatus Leconte (oso̍ n); among the mice, the worst pest is Dendromys messorius Thomas (njaa); and there are also other species, such as Mus pusillulus Ptrs. (oko̍b). In places elephants and buffaloes, which likewise eat the fruit, create a great deal of destruction. The guib (nko̍k) eats the leaves. Fruit

244 789 rot (ntūi ngo̍n, that is "diarrhea of the ngon"), the result of an overabundant rainfall, likewise reduces the harvest, at times to a considerable extent. Against all these enemies there is not much to be done since they do not pay much attention to preventive medicines; nonetheless, Pangwe women believe that they can influence the seeds and the young plants by all kinds of means, as in the case of the groundnut. One such means, ba-aya, has already been described in connection with the groundnut. A second method consists of sprinkling the seeds themselves in the bush plate where they are kept for sowing with red wood that has been ground to a powder (red

244 789 824 wood as a symbol of growth, joy, and reproduction). Another procedure to encourage the growth of the ngon plants and to make them produce an abundance of fruit is called emiĕ ndo̍b, that is, squirting of (the medicine in the) banana leaf vessel. For this purpose a vessel made of banana leaves is buried in the middle of the farm or set up there, and the following things are put into it.

244 789 824

1. Fruit of Alchornea cordifolia Muell. Arg. (abuī), because of the quantity of its fruit; hence also its name abuī from abuī, "much" (compare a bue, "break into pieces," for then there are many pieces!).

2. Herb of the Amaranthaceae Aerua lanata (L.) Juss. (angṓnengṓne III, angṓngṓne = assimilated, angṓngōno), because of its abundant inflorescence.

3. Fruit of the Pseudospondias microcarpa (Rich.) Engl. (ofŏs), because of its many fruits (cf. groundnut medicines).

4. Fruit of the Euphorbiacea Staphysora duseni Pax. (owūwŭmu II and III), because of its many flowers; hence the name is derived from a wŭmu, "to put forth," the name being formed by reduplication.

5. Pulverized leaves of the melegueta pepper, Aframomum melegueta K. Schum. (andŭn), likewise because of the luxuriant growth of the plant. /98/

All these items are stirred together in water inside the vessel and are then squirted onto the young ngon plants by means of a piece of stalk of the Cissus (pfăzŏk IV), so that the ngon may "grow as luxuriantly as the Cissus shoot."

Depending upon the region, the various elements and admixtures of the medicine differ; frequently some of them are used by themselves. For instance, Staphysora mixed with charcoal is scattered on the plants. All the components of the medicine listed above, however, are chosen because they can transfer their power to the ngon plants.

244 834 The economic importance of ngon is indicated by the fact that among the Ntum and Fang the women who planted the ngon are forbidden to have sexual intercourse for three months. The significance of this disproportionately long period of fast, if I may call it such, may be measured by the fact that in the important women's cult Mekang, for instance, the initiates are forced to practice only ten days' sexual abstinence, and in the most important men's cult, the

244 and for that reason yams, especially the air tuber yam, are frequently planted with ngon. In general, the only edible part of the yam is the rhizome, and in the case of the air tuber yams, only the air tubers which all fall off at the same time when they are ripe. This has given rise to a symbolic custom practiced when the children eat yam. [188] For instance, when the three sons of one mother eat yams, the first nudges the second, and the latter nudges the third, as a sign that they wish to die after one another, as is natural, and not all on the same day, like the air tubers.

Considerably less can be said of the third group than of the first and second groups. The chief plant belonging to it is cassava or manioc, Manihot utilissima Pohl (mbŭn I). The times for /Fig. 54 appears here in the original text/ the cultivation of cassava are as follows:

Fig. 54. Cassava Shoot.

[132] vūḗn eséb = long dry season (December to February), felling the trees on the farm;

šō gō eséb = short rainy season (March to May), planting the shoots;

ojŭn = the rainy half of the year.

In the following eséb, in other words, from January of the following year on, that is, seven months after transplanting, harvesting may begin, and it may extend over an arbitrary period of time since the plant is a perennial.

[189] There are no medicines for the growth of cassava as there are for the groundnut and ngon. The prayer of the Pangwe -- an ancient one in new guise -- would be: "Dear God, let the groundnut and ngon flourish, cassava grows by itself!" Cassava has comparatively few enemies; only goats and sheep like to eat the leaves. There is a species of grasshopper (mbāásáń III) which descends in

244 3. undĭndŏle III: leafstalks bluish, underside of leaf along each side of the ribs has dark green lichenous excrescences.

Taro is planted twice, in the long and short rainy seasons, and it is harvested twice, in the following long and short dry seasons. All the tubers are removed from the soil, and the farm is thus harvested completely. If any tubers are forgotten, they are picked up during the next dry season, but that is the end; there are never more than two harvests from the same sowing. A piece of land once used for taro is never cultivated a second time since enough swampy soil is available. There are no medicines to promote the growth of taro.

The tubers and young leaves are eaten as vegetables. Furthermore, the Pangwe are familiar with the fact that insufficiently boiled tubers cause "metsăn," that is, itching in the neck, and so forth. The tubers are also used as medicine for blood tumors (mvĭm); the resin-like secretion of the Pachylobus fraxinifolius Engl., Burseraceae (asĕă), is placed on the swelling, and over this is smeared a salve made from the parings of raw taro tubers. This is supposed to make the diseased areas become "ntĕgan," that is, weak or soft.

Plantain

245 The shoots of the plantain, as well as of the banana which is cultivated alongside it, are planted around the village or on farms. They thrive without care and ripen during each season of the year. The plantain (1) or Negro banana, Musa paradisiaca L. (ekṓn),

1. The /German/ word Plante is derived from "plantain" which in turn comes from the Spanish plátano, "banana." Since the plantain is very different from the true banana, I consider the retention of the word "plantain" useful. The French call it banane-cochon.

Figure 56, which in the Pangwe region has 25 different varieties, does not, to be sure, attain the luxuriance of the banana which grows like a weed. Nevertheless, it is very productive, just the plant for a Negro.

4. Metalworking.

(a) Iron extraction.

325 The extraction of iron, surely one of the most admirable achievements of the Negro, is carried on in the Pangwe region only south of the Campo by the Fang and a small number of Ntum kin groups. Traces of old smelting works, on the other hand, indicate that in former times iron extraction extended farther northward. [438] /Fig. 178 appears here in the original text/. Nowadays the Bulu buy iron from the Ntum in the south, and the Jaunde and Bene buy it from the Eton. The principal places where iron is extracted are located in the Woddo and Kje regions, as well as along the upper Uelle, but compared with the places where ironstone is found, they are few in number. Although for the most part people are familiar with the technique of iron extraction, only a few really engage in it. In part the reason for this may be the laboriousness of the enterprise, but in the main it must be sought in the superstitious notions connected with the preparation of iron. These notions require the cooperation of the medicine man, the purchase of expensive medicines, and the strict observance of the rules of 325 abstinence. The rare and difficult art of extracting it from the 789 rocks and then forging it into tools and weapons has given iron a 435 special importance, perhaps also because both techniques require fire, the sacred element which /225/ /Figs. 179 and 180 appear here in the original text/ the Pangwe worship in the Ngi cult. The smelting of ironstone is therefore carried out under the guidance and supervision of the medicine man. Exactly as in the case of the cults, it is he alone who, by means of his medicine, can transfer to others the influence over the process with which he is endowed, or, more accurately, the others can obtain from the medicine man the ability to smelt iron only by purchasing a medicine from him. This smelting medicine (bĭăn akŭă, abŭb-akŭă) (1) costs five sheep,

1. bĭăn = medicine, akŭă = iron smelting, abŭb = spider, which plays a role in the acquisition medicines and is usually -- not always -- present in the smelting medicine.

Fig. 179. Drawknife for Spear Handles.

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Fig. 180. Drawknife (also Scraper) for Spear Handles.

five hens, and five pieces of brass wire, which altogether corresponds approximately to a value of 120 marks in our money. The medicine is kept in a small wooden or clay pot lined with the soft leaves of the Triumfetta (okŭn) or in a little basket. It consists of a bundle of leaves with the brain matter of an ancestor, a few pieces of skull from the ancestors placed around it, and pieces of the shaved bark of the Leguminosa Macrolobium straussianum Harms (abŏ'm, bŏ'me IV) or of the fern Marattia fraxinea Sm. (ezĭzŏ'n), and poison (nsŭ). The skull and the brain as the seat of knowledge are supposed to make the smelting process successful; the Macrolobium is supposed to cause the lump iron to lie as firmly and solidly in the smelting pit (ekiai a bŏme o si = the iron is firm [as though stamped down] under there) as this tree stands without buttress roots (hence the name abŏ'm from a bŏm, "to stamp in firmly, to pound in, and to be firmly stamped in"); the fern is supposed to cause the iron to agglomerate as beautifully as the young fern leaves.

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[435]
[824]
[826]

Unfortunately, it is impossible to make iron with this medicine alone. For better or for worse, actual work will have to be done, and for this workers are needed. These are not so difficult to obtain since they get a share of the profit, but the abstinence rules which we have already mentioned, especially those of a sexual nature, deter many of them. These rules enjoin abstinence for two months before and during the period of work, and if they are violated, the iron will

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834

325 789 824 Even the job of forging cannot be performed without medicines. Just as a medicine is buried under the furnace in the smelting hut, one is also buried under the anvil when the smithy is constructed, although this is not always the case. The medicine consists of cock's feathers, blossom panicles of the Labiata Plectranthus (kŏlṓt IV Fang, kŏ̄t IV Ntum), and leaves and stalks of the Commelinacea Aneilema aequinoctiale Kth. (nlăt I) (1). The

> a lắ-t, "unite," hence nlăt, the Aneilema (compare also a-lắ-t, "the duck," because ducks live in pairs).

two plants are burdocks and are meant to symbolize the fact that the iron particles are to be joined together as firmly in the forging as the fruit of the Plectranthus and the stalks or leaves of the Aneilema cling together -- frequently one also sees the smith throwing a few Plectranthus fruits into the blast pipe while forging. The cock belongs to the cult of the Good, or the fire, and for that reason its feathers are the most important component of the medicine. To heighten its effectiveness, the cock is also killed, and its flesh boiled together with the leaves of the Acanthacea Asystasia macrophylla (T. And.) (elŏ̄bokūī), the Connaracea Manotes zenkeri Gilg (nkắ-ndžĭ̄k I), the Ebenacea Diospyros fragrans Gürke (myĭ̄fĭ̄n IV Fang, myĭ̄pfĭ̄m IV Ntum), and the Tiliacea Desplatsia dewevrei Burset (afŏ̄nŏ̄k). This concoction is eaten by the smith. The plants mentioned have strong and flexible stalks or twigs (nkĭ̄b, "rod, whip"), and the implied wish is that the iron, in particular the spear money, will be just as strong and flexible.

325 435 Lastly it should be mentioned that in a newly constructed smithy hut the first thing to be melted down must not be crude iron but only worked iron.

The smith's tools include:

325 1. Large forging iron (ngŏ̄n[d]ŏ̄ III) of the form shown in Figure 187, Drawing 1; for cruder work it is used as a hammer, for finer work as an anvil, in which case it is pushed into the ground with its pointed end. It is worth 1,000 spears or 70 marks.

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Fig. 61. Love Medicine, Horn of the Dwarf Antelope, usually Worn on Forehead and Hung from the Helmet Hairdo.

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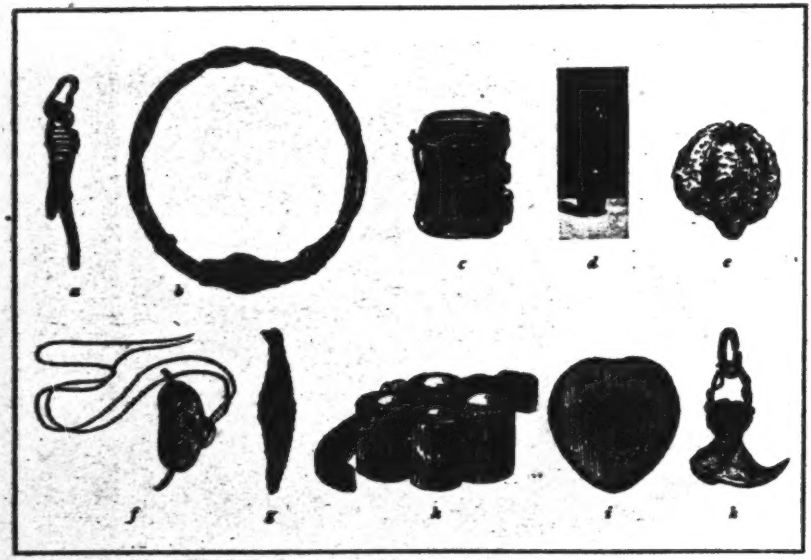

Fig. 62
(Caption on following page.)

777 a monkey's tail. The hunter thus becomes similar to the animal,
824 as it were, and the animal loses its shyness of him. In still other
224 cases, the game is to be made "weak" while the hunter and his hunting dog are to be made "strong," and for this purpose parts are taken from corresponding plants, or they are taken from trees that bear much fruit in order to have similarly rich results. Finally, plants are chosen which are intended to remove the noxious impurity of the body. /Fig. 62. Medicines of the Fang. (a) medi-
● 789 cine for wealth, the root of a tree (Homalium africanum) decorated with brass wire and a brass ring; (b)-(d) medicine against enemy weapons; (e) medicine against enemy surprise attacks, fruit of the Tiliacea Duboscia macrocarpa (akak), to make enemies calm, peaceful (Duboscia and Leptonychia = peace linden); (f) medicine for successful travels; (g) medicine for speaking and singing well, contains the tooth of a tree cony (which is continually "singing"); (h) medicine for the Dschama dance; (i) medicine against palpitations and nervousness, the heart-shaped fruit of the Ertela scandens, worn around the neck (makes the heart strong), about 1/4 actual size; (k) war medicine, leopard claw, 1/2 actual size./ /166/ The manner of use varies: sometimes it is
777 internal, the leaves being cut up into small pieces and eaten with
224 the meat of the animal one has most recently sometimes killed;
783 it is external, in the form of injections of a bark infusion, which have the double effect of removing the impurity from the body and imparting to it the essence of the plant; or a piece of wood is charred and then used to draw a line across the forehead, so that one "looks" just like the plant concerned. Most frequently, the impurity is removed by ablutions: either individual parts, face, hands, and frequently also elbows and the knee, as well as the rifle, are washed in medicine water; or the entire body is washed in a stream, on which occasion a little dam blocks off the water which, after the completion of the ablution, is again allowed to run its course so that it will carry the dirt far away downstream (oš̆üe nkiai). In order to guarantee the lasting efficiency of the
777 medicines, people generally wear pieces of wood and bark as
224 pendants on neck chains, hunting pouches, satchels, belts, and so forth.

769 The veneration of skulls likewise occurs in the case of the
224 hunting medicines. The skull of a man killed by violent means,
826 whose corpse remained on the spot (if the man belongs to the same kinship group), is kept in a bark box and taken care of as in ancestor worship. When a huntsman kills a wild animal, for example, he takes the first piece that falls to him in the distribution of the meat to the skull as a thanks offering. This piece consists of the sex organs and the flesh around them (ekīlă', see Fig. 92 in Vol. I). After he has taken it to the skull, he carries it off again
[262] to eat it himself. On the other hand, if there has been no luck on the hunt, a chicken is killed for the "man" in the box so he will see to it that a wild animal soon appears in front of his protégé's rifle and will be hit as effectively as he was in his time.

721 In addition, the Fang have a great war medicine, a celebra-
● 789 tion which is called aṅgūṅgu and is a companion festivity to the engongeschok. On this occasion, a sacred place is set up, a subterranean corridor similar to that described in the case of the Ngi /Ed., not translated/ is dug, and a dwarf antelope, Cephalophus
[825] melanorheus Gray (ogbwŭ́ṅ), which must have been caught alive, is brought to the place. Then the medicine man stations himself at one end of the corridor, and all the other men, armed with rifles,
[824] hang a seed of the Sorindeia rubriflora Engl. (afắne[k]) as medicine around their necks, and crawl -- the first with the antelope in his arms -- through the corridor. At the exit, the medicine man gives all of them, including the antelope, a medicine. The antelope is thereupon released, and it is believed that when a surprise attack is planned and the enemy has got wind of it, the animal will appear and thereby warn the attackers. By way of medicines to secure the /167/ necessary courage for such an attack, five different ones are available.

777 The medicines for trapping and fishing are rarer than the shot
226 medicines, a sign that these occupations are more in the Pangwe's
224 blood than open hunting. I have taken down only eight plants for fish medicines and twelve for trap medicines.

821 to penetrate into houses. To be sure, this lightning is a disobedi-
775 ent fellow who has already caused his primeval mother Alonkok a great many difficulties, and he does not always heed the command of the souls. If it should happen at any time that in his willfulness he strikes the houses -- incidentally, I never heard of such a thing happening -- the natives do not assume that there was malice on the part of the souls. Possibly, as is only human, they aimed wrong. For this reason the Pangwe, who like all primitive people are quite apprehensive in other respects, are not afraid of thunder
[152] storms. A momentary fright, however, caused by the brightness of the lightning and the violence of the thunder, can very often be observed in the case of nervous temperaments.

There is only one more question: "Why is it that the souls make use of their 'lightning rifles' only when it rains; they could surely strike down the trees just as well without it?" To this my Pangwe has a ready answer: "It doesn't work so well, because rain and storms make a passage through the air for the lightning bolt, and then the souls have an easier time of it." /198/

Rain medicines are infrequent in the Pangwe region; rain does
● 789 not need to be summoned for there is enough of it -- God knows --
821 in tropical West Africa. They would sooner fend it off, for instance, during the drying of ngon, at cult festivals, sometimes during the harvest, and on journeys. For this reason, unnecessary beating of drums is avoided because it invites rain, in accordance with the view, which, incidentally, also prevails outside the Pangwe region, that (rumbling) thunder is produced by rain.

During the drying of ngon, women sometimes place an inverted pot covered with leaves on the village square. Next to it they plant a little stick with a plantain dyed red speared on it,
[824] and they perhaps plant a twig of Petersia minor Niedenzu (abiń) near it. The pot is supposed to represent the vessel in the sky in which the rain is enclosed (mvé, "pot," mvǒ-ṅ, "rain"). Covering the pot indicates that they wish to have the heavenly pot closed in the same manner. The plantain is a plant of the moon which determines the seasons and thus also the rain, and the red coloration is, as it were, a courtesy paid to the moon. I was unable to discover the relationship of the Petersia to rain, but in the

opinion of one Fang, the word a biñǎn, which is contained in the name abiñ, has the sense of "moving about and rumbling," and they want the stormy weather just to move about and rumble.

The help of the ancestors is employed in another method of combatting Jupiter Pluvius, one that is used chiefly for cult festivities. The ancestral figures, festively smeared with oil and red wood, are placed in front of the house where they would be drenched "to the skin" if they did not see to it that no rain fell on this particular day. At the same time the ancestral skulls are frequently painted with a salve made of red wood and ground bark of Pentaclethra macrophylla, whose pods, when they are ripe, burst open with a pop and fling the fruit a great distance; in this way the natives indicate that the rain should be flung to one side in the same fashion.

When women are in the fields harvesting -- especially at the harvest of ngon -- and rain threatens, they put a little water and a stone in a leaf bundle and hang this up in the field. In the same manner the rain is supposed to remain suspended in the sky, be as heavy as the stone, and stay in its place just like a Negro whose "heart is heavy" and who shows no inclination for any kind of undertaking.

Medicines with a similar effect are used on journeys. A leaf of Trachyphrynium violaceum Radl. (tsĕdĕkiă'i, IV Fang) is twisted into a bag, filled with a little water, and then fastened to one finger. By doing this, the rain is held fast. Another medicine consists of hanging up old pieces of wood saturated with water, so that the rain will likewise be absorbed up in the sky. Furthermore, a person will take a Petersia twig or a fern leaf dipped in water in his hand, /199/ so that the rain will be broken up into as many little parts as the small pinnules of the fern. Finally, there is the familiar Selaginella, the herb of "missing" (zĕlănă', from á sĕlăn, "to miss"), that is to say, the rain is supposed to miss man.

It should be emphasized that the Pangwe no longer regard these medicines seriously and even ridicule them as "superstition"; they have long since noticed that none of them helps. Hence, medicines against rain are no longer used today, except as a joke. A possible exception may be the cooking pot medicine of the women,

789 178 but even that seems to be dying out for its meaning is frequently no longer understood. Thus I once (on an earlier occasion) found an open cooking pot set up as rain medicine; I simply could not understand this until I saw the authentic medicine and was informed that in the first case a mistake had been made.

821 According to one conception, the rainbow is the handiwork of a great sorcerer who wanted to show the others what he was capable of performing. Other natives think the rainbow is water vapor or smoke, and when it appears in the east, late in the afternoon, people say jokingly that one end is standing in the Campo and the other end in the Uelle. A third notion concerning the rainbow -- and this one is probably based on its iridescent colors -- is that it represents a water snake. The word for rainbow is, accordingly, nyŭ-n̂ III, from nyŏ', "water snake." In addition, there is ntūtŭ'm I, derived from the onomatopoetic expression tŭmetŭmetŭm, a designation for a flickering in front of the eyes.

The Tale concerning the Origin of the Rainbow

821 539 773 Once upon a time the grandmother of Ekute Essamniámabōge said to her grandson: "Go and show me the place where your mother always catches fish." Thereupon Ekute went along with her and showed her a good place along the river, but his grandmother said: "No, this was not the place." Then her grandson showed her another place, but here, too, the grandmother said: "This is not the place where I am going to fish." They went together this way to four other places, but at none did the grandmother want to fish. Finally, the grandson said: "There are no more places for fishing; after this there is only the large river left." The grandmother replied: "All right, that is where we shall go." But her grandson said: "Oh, the places where everybody fishes are here, but in the big river the fishing is poor." However, the grandmother answered: "But I want to take a look at the place; come along, we shall leave right away." Thereupon the grandson went along with her, and when they came to the spot where the river widened, the grandmother said: "Here is where I want to fish." The grandson

821 Thus Essamniámaböge became very wealthy, and from this money
773 alone he was able to purchase two wives.
539 Now it happened that he and all the people were gone one day, and only his son, Ekute, stayed behind. Then several people from a distant village appeared, but they had brought with them only two choppers (2), and in exchange for these they demanded

2. Bush knives valued at two marks.

to see the snake. Ekute, however, did not want to show it to them. The people argued with him and threatened, and they demanded to see the snake. Then Ekute, who was very imprudent, angrily took a chopper and knocked in the top of the house wall instead of carefully opening the door somewhat and letting the people look in. Thereupon the snake came out, went to the village square, and cried "See, now I am leaving." But the people and Ekute had run off. Thereupon the snake raised its head and body and swung itself into the air. At this very moment Ekute's father came back and was just able to cut off the lower end of the snake; the other part of the snake was already high up in the air and still stands in the sky today as the rainbow. The tail, however, turned into the python, and from the eggs there crept forth all the other little snakes. /201/

821 The storm is likewise represented as the handiwork of an evil
● 789 sorcerer. Whenever a great sorcerer is dying, he unleashes a storm,
[754] lays low the plantain fields of those people toward whom he feels ill will, destroys their houses, and indeed, he goes so far as to knock down their children in order to injure them. Anyone who has experienced a tropical tornado will understand the notion of the Pangwe that sorcerous beings are at work. The natives also have medicines against storms; the storm is gradually weakened if
[824] one places young macabo leaves (these are weak to begin with) on the fire (whereby they become still weaker) and then grinds them to a powder on the ground in front of the house (this makes them weakest of all). Conversely, the storm is "made heavy" and thereby held back in the sky by placing a stone on Paspalum grass (obū't), which, because of its toughness and strength, is supposed

789 821 to represent the storm. Thus the storm is pressed onto the ground, as it were. If the storm is already approaching, they beat a plantain stalk to tatters on the ground of the village square, and as they do so, they exclaim:

[539] okŭ[š] a lŭde ma a lŭd: Okă[k] nkĭă
Storm, it pass by me, by (pass), (to) Okak in the west.

3. Astronomy

821 772 Even for a primitive people the astronomical knowledge of the Pangwe is very limited. This fact can be excused only in part by the unfavorable conditions of their country (rainy forest region).

The Pangwe have the same conception of the earth as that of the "ancients," that is to say, they think of it as flat like a plate and surrounded on all sides by the ocean. Over the earth and the ocean arches the sky which, as is stated in the creation story, originated as a part of the earth that was blasted off and raised up on high. In other words, the sky is thought of as firm and finitely bounded, just as is the earth. One should, accordingly, imagine a large bell jar placed over a gigantic plate in the center of which the earth floats in water, and this gives one the conception held by the Pangwe. As regards the earth, they naturally think only of Africa, that is, they conceive of it as one single continuous land mass.

The sky is infinitely high; the tallest mountains known to the Pangwe do not extend into it. One would have to set about 200 or more silk-cotton trees (Ceiba, on the average 70 meters tall) end on end in order to touch the sky.

821 [823] The material of the sky is similar to that of the earth, and, like it, it is harder and firmer on the inside and softer, more fluid on the outside -- a train of thought engendered by the swamps and the softened loam soil. Just as the crust of the earth forms clods, so the outer surface of the sky forms "scales" (ebă[s] e dzŏb "scales of the sky," that is to say, clouds). The clouds, however, are

821 our Sunday, as if all nature had to take a rest.

805 By way of contrast, the days around the full moon are no good for hunting, probably because the moon when it is full is especially "evil" and hateful to all those who are sinless -- as are animals, for instance. Even the festivals of the moon cult (Sso) are never celebrated at the full moon, but always towards the time of the new moon in order not to display evil in its most glaring form. The natives count nine "days of the full moon," the sacred number which we have already encountered in the cults /203/, and during this time the Pangwe speaks of the ndžībe ngō'n, that is, the closed (full) moon, or ndžīge ngō'n or abǔm e ngō'n, that is, the used moon. On these days the people do work, but fishing, trapping, and hunting drives are not practiced. Among the Fang, a direct taboo (ekī) exists for these three activities, though it is true that they like to circumvent this taboo -- like many others -- with the help of medicines.

Rules are made to be circumvented, the Ntum in Bebai thought, [789] and during the days of the full moon they very gaily held great hunting drives. They also made a medicine by cutting a circle -- the full moon -- into the bark of a tree and within the circle removing half of the bark. In this way it became a half moon (Fig. 64). This medicine is delightfully naïve and beautifully indicates how the Negro knows how to help himself in all situations.

821 Concerning the nature of the stars the "Pangwe scholars" are not yet quite agreed. Some believe the stars are simply holes in the vault of the sky through which the sun can be seen at night as it moves over the arch. Others say that they are little fires which during the day are simply outshone by the brightness of the sun. Still others -- and these are probably in the majority -- assume that the stars are little celestial bodies like the sun and the moon, but that they are afraid of the sun, so during the day they withdraw into the interior of the vault, and during the night, fleeing from the sun as it moves across the top of the arch, they come out and then become visible, hence their name o-tǐ'-tē-ī, from the root a tḗ = to move from one's place (1). If one of the stars has ventured too

1. oa tḗ odĕn = when did you leave (travel from) home?

821
[789]
[224]

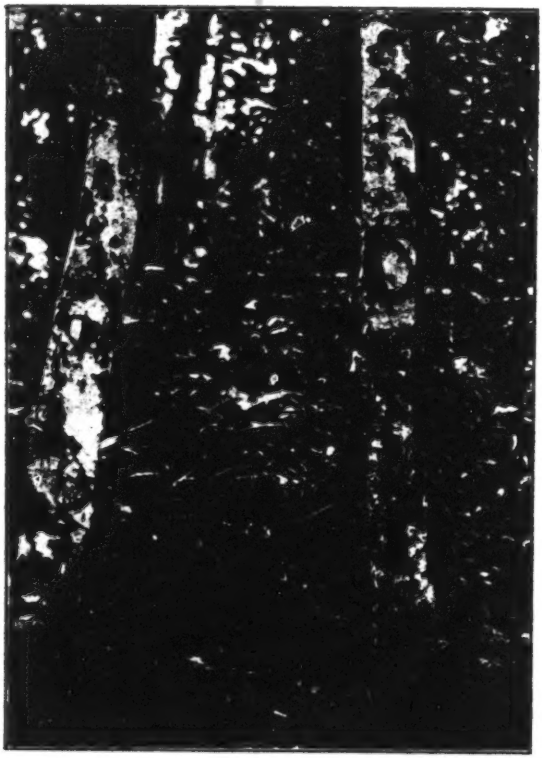

Fig. 64. Medicine on trees, so that a hunting drive may be undertaken during the full moon, something which is actually prohibited. Bébai (Esseng Family), South Cameroons.

and cold. "If the moon is cold and has no light of its own, how is it that you can see it? After all, you cannot see people dressed in white either when everything is dark!" This objection the Pangwe counter with the reply: "On earth it is dark, but in the sky it is bright, that is, nothing obscures the view there!"

from four to six years old. They are thus consecrated so that one day they will surpass all others in insight and understanding; then, through their spiritual superiority, they will acquire influence, power (knowledge is power!), and especially wealth. In the case of the son, this will be to his own advantage; in the case of the daughter, it will benefit the father who can get a higher purchase price for her than for a girl with the usual loose way of life. In other words, the "savages" know well the value of moral purity. /269/

The custom of miǯk consecration was formerly practiced throughout the Pangwe region. Nowadays, however, since warlike times have ceased, it is to be encountered only among the Fang of the central Uelle region. I should like to compare the custom to the practice found among us during the Middle Ages, whereby the heads of important families (especially princes), after some lucky success (for instance, in war), destined one child for the clergy and consecrated it to the pure life dedicated to God, frequently not without calculating the advantages that could accrue to them from such an action.

The procedure of the consecration feast is as follows. The child, clothed in a small loincloth, is led to the medicine man and is washed by him with a medicine water. The medicines used for this are barks of various trees that bear ample fruit, such as the Pseudospondias microcarpa (Rich.) Engl. (ofǒs), so that the child's understanding may bear fruit as abundantly as these trees or, in other words, so that wealth may fall to its lot in the same abundance as the fruit of these trees falls to the ground beneath them. The various barks are placed in a container made of banana leaves, and hot water is poured over them. After the ablution, the child must swallow the principal medicine, a bundle of ngon with the chopped leaves of certain "weak" plants, such as Hibiscus moschatus (Roxb.) (tége III, from a tĕk, "weak," because the fruit is cooked in a short time), in order to make the child equally weak, that is, sexually incapable. Furthermore, the ngon is mixed with chicken meat -- the chicken is the bird of day, of the good and the pure, and at the same time it is supposed to point symbolically to the wealth that is desired for the child (the chief, the "Very Rich One," is regarded as the privileged son of the

843
842 If three months after the treatment the woman is still not pregnant, there is nothing to be done and she has to give up having children.

(2) A woman may be barren after abortion because of her evur. This
842 is recognized in that she aborts with much suffering and then stays
789 ill afterwards for more than eight days. An appeal is made to the
824 practitioner, who renders the evur harmless by making it crazy. After having made the woman take a medicine made of white honey (abe), bark of a cola tree (abel), and bark of abal and atega trees, all mixed with chicken blood, the practitioner goes with her to the ovañ where where he customarily conducts his ceremonies, and performs a kind of exorcism which was not revealed to us. Once back in the village, the woman follows the same [79] treatment as in the case of natural abortion. The secret ceremony performed by the practitioner is called avi evur akur (making the evur crazy).

843 (3) Finally, the abortion may have been caused by a male member
842 of the husband's family, the possessor of an evur, who is revealed by
789 the practitioner. If the woman wants to have children, the guilty one must die. He is discovered in the course of a ceremony, part of which is carried out at night and at which the presence of women is forbidden; this is the dance of the bisir. An akuma singer is brought, who recites stories of the tribes of both husband and wife. Before him, covered by a large cloth, lie three or four men who are the bisir. These men have in their hands pointed pieces of bamboo. A young boy of the husband's family is brought there. He passes several times between the singer and the bisir, who prick the boy's legs with the bamboo sticks. The child then goes back into his hut while the songs continue until dawn, the men of the village dancing and clapping their hands in accompaniment to the singer.

In the morning the husband of the aborted woman goes into the forest to find two wooden forks, a limb, and some branches. He plants the two forks in the village square, places the limb on them horizontally, and conceals the forks under the branches; this structure is called nzum. The child who passed before the bisir the previous night is seated on the rail. Before all the assembled men and women of the village, the aborted woman approaches the child and says madzuna, nzum me tela esi üi, e mur awu makula mebum abure (I say, I stay under the nzum so that the man may die who caused me to abort).

842 After this second part of the ceremony, called elum nzum, the
843 child is hidden for eight days in a hut, and women are forbidden to
789 see him during this time; he is now called mvun. On the morning of the eighth day, the men lay him on a mat in the village square and cover him with mats and cloths so that the women do not see him; the inhabitants of the village are again assembled, and the men of the husband's family step over the mvun one after the other, saying: madzune, e mvun ebue ni ngi me ki me nga kule abum, me bure (I say, the mvun is lying there; if it is I who caused the abortion, may I die). When all the men have passed, the child is taken away. Some time later the guilty one becomes sick, has a swollen abdomen, and dies, there being no possibility of caring for him. After his death, the woman is treated as in the case of natural abortion.

843 Pregnancy (ndzua abum). When a woman is pregnant, she is bound by numerous obligations and prohibitions which aim to care for the child which she carries so that she can bring it into the world in good health. [80]

843 The obligations consist of taking medicines; to prevent the child
757 from having sores in the womb of its mother, she takes an infusion of the roots of various trees. This medicine is called ese bibolo (to treat infections); if it is neglected, the child is born with infected sores which never heal.

The future mother must also go every three days into the brush and give herself a washing with a preparation of bark of ebom which has fermented in water. After each enema, water is added to the vessel containing the pieces of bark, which are kept until the delivery.

That the child may be strong, the pregnant woman anoints her abdomen with an ointment prepared by the midwife with padouk powder mixed with raphia oil and bark.

843 Finally, to prevent abortion, the woman wears on her skin, like a
757 belt, a piece of okum vine, which is not removed until after the birth of the child.

843 All this does not prevent the woman from continuing her work; when she feels tired, it is because the child is sick, and the midwife treats her with one of the medicines mentioned above. If the woman's husband has not had children for a long time, the future mother then enjoys much esteem; she receives gifts, and her husband pays a great deal of attention to her.

844 see it, and if she sees it she will have no more children. The mother is then washed with very hot water in which pimento has been steeped; after this her abdomen is bound with a belt of bark (ewag) which she keeps on for several days.

846 After the birth of her child, a young mother is known by the name of nzinze, which she keeps until she has the right to resume relations with her husband. She has a special bed in the hut, on which a [844] menstruating woman may neither sit nor lie so as not to give scabies to the mother and the newborn. The young mother rests for about three months, during which she does no work and bathes every day with water as hot as she can stand, the lumbar region especially being [757] bathed. Moreover, after every bath she is smeared with red paste (ba) to prevent scabies.

Recovery from childbirth is marked by a celebration (okula mon). The first time she goes out, the woman carries a package of ba, a piece of which she places on every tree stump she meets on her way, to mark her path. On her return she prepares a large quantity of food she has brought back. The husband invites the men of his tribe, and the wife invites the women of her husband's tribe. When the food is ready, it is taken to the men in the watchers' hut, where the child is also taken. The women eat in the hut.

846 827 757 To improve the quality of her milk, the young mother drinks progressively, if necessary, three medicines:

(1) An infusion of aseh roots.

(2) A milky-looking infusion of pieces of tubers of a plant with a thorny stem (ekon bökun).

(3) Latex from a rubber plant.

761 789 It may be that the child dies at birth. Three causes for this are recognized:

An evur has eaten the child. To prevent this from being repeated and so that the woman will in the future bring living children into the world, she resorts to the practitioner. He goes into the forest armed [83] with a machete and a basket. He gathers the bark of an ovan, and also brush and vines that grow under this tree. On his return to the village he divides his collection into two parts. One part, mixed with water, is put in a large rectangular container of banana leaves called etok, which has been filled with the blood of a domestic animal sacrificed for the welfare of the woman. She then immerses herself

761 in the etok and stays there for a certain length of time. While she is
789 in this bath, she eats a soup made of the rest of the bark gathered by the practitioner, together with a pumpkin, a piece of the heart, liver, and some blood of the sacrificial animal, all cooked in a pot. This remedy is intended to satisfy the evur and prevent it from eating the blood of the woman or of the child which she may carry in her womb in the future.

761 The death of the child may also arise from an akaga given to its mother, which predicted that one of her children would not live.

761 Finally, if there is neither evur nor akaga, this mishap is believed
784 to be caused by the violation of a prohibition or, more likely, by
837 adultery committed by the woman during her pregnancy. To make her denounce her accomplice, she is beaten until she has named him. This man must then pay to the husband an indemnity equal to half the dowry which he spent to get his wife, an indemnity which represents the price of the adultery and the price of the child's corpse. The woman is subjected from then on to the prohibition of awos until the the birth of her next child.

854 The child (mon). Until it talks, the child is called nkanele. We We have seen that after its birth it is washed in cold water and not fed until the following morning. The breast is first given it by another woman rather than by the mother, whose milk is not good at first.

At the age of eight days, the child is smeared with ba. If the cord dries up by itself without trouble, it is enough to moisten it with saliva.

845 Anomalies such as the birth of an albino or of twins are considered
[143] normal. The natives have stated that albinos are reproduced in the same family at an interval of three generations. As to twins, they are
[557] forbidden later on to take part in the ngwel. If the twins are boys, the first is called Nzugo, the second Dzima; if they are girls, they are given the names respectively of Bela and Nzua.

551 A name is not given a child until several months after birth, when one is almost certain that it will live. A child receives several names. The father chooses the first name from among his ancestors. For example, a boy will be called Osene from the name of a paternal ancestor, to this name of Osene has been added the name of his father Ekomi, and so the child is called Osene Ekomi; but he also has a sort of first name chosen by the parents, which in the present case is [84] Andzang. The complete name thus is Andzang Osene Ekomi. The mother's

5: Balandier--100 E-5 (1946-1951) 1955 FH9 Fang FH9

562

brought supplies regularly to Gabon, escorted by men with flintlock guns.

the woman is primarily a peasant. She ensures to a large extent the economy of subsistence, even taking part in hunting. With the arrival of colonization this aspect has taken on a new importance and a new direction. With the opening of increasingly more numerous markets and the established use of money, the products obtained by the woman have become a source of income, and the woman, as a worker, a source of profit. The woman became of great economic value and became, as one might say, doubly fertile. At the same time, her purely instrumental nature and her dependence became more marked. She tended to be truly an "object," all the more coveted since polygamy (in spite of the "freedom" allowed young unmarried people) makes of the woman a scarce "product". (2) The woman stands at the center of all

2. Cf. C. Levi-Strauss, Les Structures Élémentaires de la Parenté [Elementary Structures of Kinship], Paris, P.U.F., 1949.

competition at the same time that she remains the most dominated element of Fang society, because she is the one from whom most is demanded. It seems as if the woman were "separated" from the society of men, a stranger to the most organized and most active social body, and as if her impure nature is periodically asserted to better ensure her submission. This may all the better be explained because among the men the leveling tendency and the refusal to have slavery have not permitted the established existence of a relationship between one dominating and one dominated.

562 789 This situation presents some ambiguity. The "mother" has relative authority over her sons and has at her disposal the weapon of calling down curses (yogõ, to curse), by which she denies her "mother" quality. (3) In the same way, the first wife may curse

3. Cf. L. Mba, op. cit., p. 35, the text of the "Curse."

562 789 her husband. The "son-in-law" and the "mother-in-law" are bound together by a system of interdicts; the mwanō are required [506] to show respect to the "generation of the mothers"; the pre-eminence attached to seniority plays a role in the relations between the sexes. The woman may therefore be the object of respect and the subject of fear. [151] On the other hand, "associa-562 795 tions" of women which have created a hierarchy, a teaching, a ritual of initiation, and a whole body of distinguishing symbols and signs and a technique shown by a specific dance, are referred to in various documents, particularly the Mévungō (1), which is

1. Unpublished documents collected by Abbot A. Walker, a native of Lower Gabon and truly versed in local ethnology.

a Pahouin version of the Nyèmbé, a widely disseminated female sect in Gabon. This sect was observed by Du Chaillu about 1860 among the Ba-kélé who were for the most part subdued by the Fang. This observer wrote at that time that the Nyèmbé "protects the women from their male enemies, it avenges their grievances, and serves them in all circumstances according to their whims."(2)

2. Father du Chaillu, op. cit., p. 322 ff.

This points out with great subtlety, to the essentially compensatory role played by such a grouping. By participating in the "society of women," the woman remedies the marginal situation and the submission which are her share throughout her daily life. It imposes or necessitates her collaboration in important moments for the community and in domains which in principle are forbidden to her. [535] Thus the dance of the Mévungō was used "long ago when a Pahouin tribe was preparing to wage war against another tribe or to make raids for women"; it was also used "at the time of preparation for great elephant hunts." (3) Such "associations" no longer survive

3. Abbot A. Walker, notes inédites [unpublished notes].

judicial inquiry at Ambam in 1948 after a raid on ze mimfaka, an old chief who was a Protestant and an elder of his church declared, in so many words, that "the white man has weakened the ngil, and the beyem have taken it over; now it is the ngil of ngbwel /sorcery/."

The initiates of the kôn or kun, a kind of magic that enables one to assume another person's strength without destroying his body, also seem to be grouped into a secret society with meetings every seven years.

Beyem associations do not usually include both sexes; male and female sorcerers meet together only occasionally, for orgiastic sabbaths.

The distinction between white and black magic is, nevertheless, difficult to draw the present time, and one can never tell offhand if the small groups springing up nearly everywhere to protect their members against bad luck by using, in addition to remnants of traditional rites, recipes copied from magic manuals printed in France, belong to the one or the other.

To come back tothe traditional associations, we must underline /the fact that/ in them there was a complete separation of the sexes, to such an extent that women were often forbidden to speak the name of a men's society or to show any kind of knowledge, even superficial, of its rites. The prohibition was less stringent for men with regard to women's rites, since the nsem, the breaking of a taboo, was for them punished by physical incapacity or illness rather than by death. /66/

A women's rite like mevungu had both a village aspect, on account of its geographical framework, the jurisdiction of its huts, and an interclan aspect as a result of exogamy. Much less is known of these women's rites than of the men's, for the very good reason that men are not allowed to know anything about them. Missionaries have condemned mevungu as obscene: I have heard that initiates who have gone through the menopause are supposed to play a male role in dances miming coition, without being able to obtain the slightest proof or the least detail (1). What is certain is that this is a rite of

1. A woman "chosen for her large vagina" presided, seated with legs spread apart. Each initiate would go tickle her and pull the clitoris. (J. B.)

fecundity, of fertility, and also of the hunt: an unlucky hunter may have his wife initiated so as to ward off bad luck.

have his wife initiated so as to ward off bad luck. This is not the only example of the indirect intervention of one sex in a rite of the opposite sex. Allégret points out that it is a "woman who has had bad luck fishing" who "finds the ironwood for making the war fetish." It certainly seems that he has mixed up ngil with sô, but the example remains valuable. Therefore, though traditional rites and the associations of initiates of these rites were strictly masculine or feminine, this does not altogether exclude the intervention of the opposite sex. No more can be said in our present state of knowledge (2).

2. The other important women's rite, ngômbô, was more especially limited to old women. The participants built a sort of basin out of four banana trunks and their leaves, in which a vegetable biañ /medicament/ was prepared that gave protection against theft. (J.B.)

Contemporary cults and associations, on the other hand, are open to both sexes, whether religious or politico-religious societies or mutual-aid associations.

The two principal politico-religious associations are the bwiti (or mbuti) and the ngôl, well described by Balandier (no. 175). They have spread to the north from Gabon and the Middle Congo and are not of Pahouin origin. They are beginning to penetrate Boulou country, where they have not been as successful as among the Fang of the south, undoubtedly because of the lesser degree of social destruction.

Bwiti was originally a "tyogo" ancestor cult, comparable to the Pahouin biéri, if one accepts Trilles. It must have first appeared among the Pahouin at the beginning of the century, probably among Pahouin families cut off from their clans and thus from the biéri and sô rites, whose significance is primarily ethnic and familial. Libreville was an important point of contact, not only between African peoples of different stock, but also with European religious systems. Modern bwiti borrows a great deal from Christianity and also from freemasonry, which was fairly widespread in Gabon before the war, especially in half-caste circles and on the periphery of principal towns. In assuming this syncretist character, bwiti appears at the same time as a nationalist—or Africanist—movement and as a progressive movement abandoning the old cults or rather modernizing them. It is the

754 as a result of the magician's natural spitefulness (ézezam = wickedness, disorder; nlelañ = malevolence, from élañ = an evil act committed expressly and without necessity: a woe bot elan = he who kills for pleasure, ndan of the begôvina* from the German occupation until

*/No footnote is given to this puzzling phrase, but "begôvina" may mean "government people." —Tr./

the present). A protective bian against the beyem can be used against an innocent mie, a magical weapon, a spell against a brother. Such an action may constitute not only an étom, a delict, but also a nsem, a breaking of taboo, when initiation into magical technique included a prohibition against using it for evil ends. The same thing holds for the use of certain methods, illegal or immoral in themselves, even when the purpose is permissible or morally good: this is the case with the biañ for /ensuring/ conjugal fidelity, which consists of the husband having his wife drink his sperm; with that for curing an illness by transferring it to another person (transfer to an animal or plant is permissible); with the use of certain mebiañ for fertility, etc. The commonest acts of sorcery do not belong in the ngbwel category (and perhaps also in that of the kôn) and would lead simply to a "civil" suit, neither more nor less than a case of assault and battery or a [683] "natural" homicide. Ngbwel, on the contrary, is always a capital crime, provided that the nnem be not too powerful to escape judgment or punishment.

e. Permissible Magic, Divination, Medicine

●789 The first aim of licit magic is to fight against sorcerers, especially beyem, but that is only one of its aspects. In fact, it extends to all life's activities, and everyone uses it to a greater or less extent, aside from the specialists, ngengañ or ngañ, magician, mvimvi'i, diviner, mbibian, healer, and nyia bia, singer.(1).

[793] 1. Among the Ewôndo there used to be a sort of priest, nzomelo, often a chief, who received the first fruits of maize, blessed sowings, and presided over the ancestor cult. (J. B.)

789 Magic appears to be a technique for making use of the strength, tyi, contained in every element of the universe /création/, which everyone has more or less the capacity, ngul, to employ. Elementary magic is taught within the family, advanced magic /is taught/ in associations, by experienced practitioners and also, nowadays, through /120/ correspondence with European charlatans. All initiations include a course in magic, all associations possess a body of specialists.

787 Divination, mvi'i, and medicine, mboan mebiañ, are to magic in general what in Europe the special branches are to general medicine.
791 Every ngengañ is a diviner and physician, but he may consult a colleague more specialized in one of those branches.

Everyone learns from childhood on to interpret everyday omens, which are mostly taken from "zoomancy:" the flight or song of certain birds, meeting certain animals in certain circumstances, etc. The interpretation of the movements of the victim of a family sacrifice, the abôp spider oracle, asking the advice of ancestors by means of the narcotic herb alañ, (iboga), require that /a person/ be already initiated. Oracles by water, sand or gravel, or conducting minkal tests require much deeper knowledge.

759 The same holds for medicine. Everyone knows the ordinary mebiañ, but for serious cases people must turn to a mbibiañ. The word biañ, usually translated "medicament," "greegree," even "fetish," indicates not only the drug, a pharmaceutical product, but also the whole of a magical act, including the chanting and dancing associated with it for grave illnesses. Pharmacopeoia and therapy proper, to some extent investigated by Baudre, Weber, and Chabeuf in the Cameroons and by Gascón in Spanish Guinea, are or were quite copious. Not only did the mbibiañ know many substances with a mainly vegetable
762 base, but they also knew how to perform several surgical operations —reduction of fractures and dislocations, incision and drainage of deep abcesses, amputations, excision of certain tumors, and perhaps trepanning. But obviously there was a great deal of pure magic mixed up with this practical medicine, and the majority of mebiañ, if they had a therapeutic effect, owed it largely to psychosomatic reactions—which is not peculiar to Pahouin medicine.

791 Aside from medicine and divination and the combating of sorcerers, the essential role of the mingengañ consisted of influencing the shaping of the destiny of the group or of the individuals, if not in controlling their destiny. The powers of high initiates to some extent

791 suggest those of the sorcerers they were fighting, as do some of their procedures. Like them, /high initiates/ were capable of telekinesis and bilocation, etc. Trilles gives numerous examples, some of which he claims to have observed himself. Like /sorcerers, initiates/ could transform themselves into animals or make use of a dedicated animal, élañela. They killed people from a distance, especially by casting a spell on a token /temoin, "witness"/ of the classical type, or by acting directly upon people with their power, ngul, by forcing them to submit to their will. Like sorcerers, also, they could be victims through repercussion.

Considering the circumstances, it is not surprising that /121/ magicians and sorcerers have often been confused, nor that some magicians have been led into making evil use of their knowledge, nor, [754] finally, that contemporary associations, like the mbuti (bwiti), intended to combat sorcery, have borrowed its methods, even in their criminal aspects.

533 789 In addition to the magicians proper, there is the singer, ñyia bia, who plays an important role in all rites, including initiations. Every important rite and ceremony has its musical accompaniment, with a specific orchestra for the occasion, and a choirmaster, who leads the incantations and acts somewhat as a master of ceremonies, without himself participating directly in the sacrifice or the magical act. It is peculiar to the ñyia bia that he is present at the three major rites, sô, ngil, and ndôngô, as at all magic ceremonies, no matter what his affiliation; apparently he is not liable to the prohibitions concerning participation affecting zesé bôt, ordinary or profane people. He [424] buys and sells or inherits his songs, is not assigned to a caste /n'est pas casté/, yet seems to have enjoyed a certain immunity during the wars of former times, but this may only have been the case with the most celebrated of the beyia bia. There are also female beyia bia, who enjoy the same prerogatives in feminine rites.

778 789 [534] Magical equipment consists, first, of the instruments appropriate to each rite, drums, horns, rattles, bells, the ngôma harp of the bwiti, etc., with a great variety of additional diverse objects: fly-whisks, akpwassa, sometimes mutilated; antelope horns filled with mebiañ; human and animal skulls and bones; pots and calabashes; engraved and decorated magician's spears; masks; the bwiti broken mirror; bikpwélé (iron "bride-price money"); shells, etc. Every magical act, every rite, has its own properties, the complete description of which would require a separate monograph for each. We

778 shall merely point out that part of this equipment, permanently assigned
789 to magical use, is étyi, taboo to the uninitiated and sometimes even to other mingengañ than the owner, that certain objects become bityi after having once been used for this purpose, while others are returned to ordinary use, and others are destroyed after use.

f. Prohibitions

784 Prohibitions, bityi, assume a large place in Pahouin life. Martrou (no. 159) has devoted a special study to them, which is very well documented but still incomplete, because of their number and diversity.

The word étyi comes from the root TYI/KI, conveying an idea of strength (cf. above, p. 133), of authority, and also of cutting, hence of prohibition; /for example, / tyik = to cut, kill, slice, decide; tyili = to render taboo; tyii = to have a taboo (étyi is the nominal-resulting form of the last verb); tyilan = to be taboo. /122/

A complete listing of the bityi is probably impossible, but a brief classification may be attempted by distinguishing /the following/:

Food prohibitions and prohibitions of actions.

Among prohibitions of actions there are those protecting certain animals, marriage prohibitions, and general sexual prohibitions.

Individual prohibitions and collective prohibitions.

Hereditary prohibitions and personal prohibitions.

Temporary and permanent prohibitions.

Masculine, feminine, and age-grade prohibitions.

Ordinary prohibitions (zesé bityi) and capital prohibitions, bityi awu (mortal ones).

All together they form a sort of network that covers every act,
[777] every phase of individual and social conduct. Mission activity and general development have caused some to disappear or have lessened the immediate consequences of infractions, minsem, but enough remain with sufficient sanction to influence the whole of day-to-day life.

[688] A nsem, a breaking of a prohibition, has various consequences, ranging from a slight illness to death, and almost always carrying with it public reprobation. The nsem may be unconscious, the culprit being unaware that his act was taboo for him, either because he had not been taught so or because the étyi had been imposed without his knowledge by a magician.

religion. For several years, exogamic taboos have even been observed to take on new life with a strictness that runs counter to canonical ideas about marriage (cf. above, p. 63).

g. Sorcery and Magic at the Present Time

Even in the areas longest converted to Christianity, contemporary Pahouin continue to believe in magic and sorcery, which is, moreover, not contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. Mbibiañ compete with European or African bedôkita, mingengañ compete with exorcists, mvimvi'i with the police, and so on. Once in a while beyem still kill in order to feed their évu, and I knew a kôn practitioner who tried to make use of his skill so as to win an election.

However, since the coming of the Europeans, magic and sorcery have developed in the direction of a syncretism that is sometimes baroque. Ecclesiastical schisms do not bring about a complete return to ancient practices, but a sort of grafting of what remains onto a Christian stem, to which is often added a facile /à bon marché/ esotericism borrowed from mages and fakirs of metropolitan France. Talismans, perfumes guaranteed to inspire love, and magical jewelry arrive by the hundredweight in each mail from France. Initiations that had died out are being revived in the form of parodies of the Mass or of ordination, or even of hazings often obscene. What was most valuable in the native pharmacopoeia is being more and more neglected in favor of modern preparations used at random, with only the magical aspect surviving, emptied of its old meaning and therefore of its functional character.

Admittedly, Christianity has "caught on" in the country, just as European medicine has—the question is, just how deeply. In any event it is certain that old practices, overthrown as they may have been, survive nonetheless in new forms, fluid and changing and still far from stabilized. The result is a continual uneasiness, a crisis in adaptation, of which the outcome is unpredictable.

Leaving aside any religious or ideological position, /124/ it does, however, seem possible to say as of now that one of the most revolutionary contributions of the missions has been to make women participate in the same religious cult as men.

575 three times. He then pulls him down to the ground, binds him
791 in front of the totem, and with one stroke of the mfor cuts the
782 carotid arteries. The blood is collected in a clay pot, which is carefully broken after the ceremony and buried. When the blood has stopped flowing, the practitioners approach. The leader, the others next, and the neophyte last, dip their hands into the pot and sprinkle the totem while they dance around it. [483]

575 Right after this the head practitioner approaches the totem
791 and smears its neck with the victim's blood, then with one stroke
782 cuts its arteries. The spouting blood is collected with care be-
266 cause no drop must fall on the ground, to avoid any profanation. The victim's blood is mixed with the totem's, and everyone dips his hand into the pot and stirs; when the contents have been thoroughly mixed, the pot is put on a fire that has been prepared and, as soon as the blood starts to coagulate, each person present approaches and drinks a bit. The neophyte takes his turn last and has to drink all that is left no matter how much.

The victim and the totem are then placed on a special pyre. Often the victim's body is opened and the heart removed and the totem's body put in its place. When the fire has pretty well roasted both bodies, they are taken off and the victim's is put aside for eating. The totem is put back on the fire and entirely consumed, except that its burnt and pulverized bones are preserved. The victim's bones are also kept and reduced to ash so that they may be mingled with the totem's. These ashes are eventually divided among all those present; the larger share go-
● 784 ing to the new practitioner to form his "totemic" fetish, which he will make use of whenever he appeals to his totem. In particular, when he takes part in the "consecration" of a new practitioner, he will, after the immolation of the totem as just described, put a pinch of these ashes on the totem's body: all his colleagues will do the same, in order to mystically unite all the totems in a common sacrifice.

At the end of the ceremony, the new practitioner must get rid of all signs of it before he returns to the village. He must see to it that no drop of blood, no trace of ash, be profaned. He breaks up the pyre, buries the pot for blood at a distance, and goes home only then, invested with a new dignity.

515 754 subjected to skillfully graduated demands, participating in ceremonies that arouse his imagination while exhausting him by their length, he gradually grows weaker and feels overwhelmed by the somber and mysterious aspect of initiation and falls into a kind of hallucination.

"In the depths of the hut [where the initiation takes place], there is a crudely sculptured image. Beneath that has been put a bundle containing the bones of a man long dead, and in front a mirror has been hung with its face towards the spectators. In all initiation proceedings the candidate is brought before the mirror and asked: 'What do you see?' For a long time he has to reply: 'I don't see anything.' As long as the reply is negative the initiation has not been successful. But finally the expected sign appears; he sees the likeness of a man in the mirror. Then he is led aside and made to describe the man whose face he has just seen. He had never seen him before [486] and cannot have known him, yet he describes him with great precision, giving all the facial traits. No cheating is possible in this. From the description given, the initiator, who is able to judge the likeness, identifies the man whose bones are beneath the image. This proof allows him to decide that the initiation is proceeding on the right track.

"Sometimes the initiator demands more personal and more active cooperation from the person seeking initiation. ... he may require that he bring the skull and a few bones of a relative of the first degree. ...

"Only when he brings in the material proofs of his crime are the final rites carried out. The bones are thrown into a [266] cauldron with herbs and other ingredients that are unsavoury. When the horrible mixture has been sufficiently cooked, the unfortunate man is made to drink a cup while the audience sings. Then what is left in the pot is divided, and everyone has a share. The small bones are wrapped in old rags, and this bundle is given [789] to the initiate: it constitutes his talisman, which he will wear and which will protect him from the dangers he fears and obtain for him the favors he desires.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

name, the *Eki* of the Fang being the *Orunda* of the Mpongwe. One day when on a journey among the people, I asked an old headman to share with me a chicken my boy had prepared for supper; the old man seemed pleased at my invitation, but asked the boy if it was a hen or cock fowl. Upon being informed that it was a cock, he declined to eat any of it: that was his *Eki*. As previously stated, I do not believe the natives worship the spirits of Present and Future, but to a certain degree ancestral worship does exist. A Fang places the skull of his father in a curious receptacle of bark, worshipping it, killing fowls and making blood offerings to it, and in many ways the whole matter somewhat resembles the worshipping at graves and before ancestral tablets as practised in China. The natives often pray to their father's skull before talking a large war palaver, or the purchase of a new woman. As worshipping departed ancestors is the chief duty of a faithful Chinaman, so making offerings and prayers to the departed father's spirit before the skull constitutes the great Fang fetish, or *bieti*. Wooden idols, *biyeme*, of men and women are made in a manner which makes the sex extremely apparent; yet whenever I have seen these figures in towns, the people did not seem to regard them as obscene, but as truthful representations of the sexes. I feel sure that to some extent, at least, phallic worship is practised among the Fang. Spirits are everywhere; in rocks, trees, forests, and streams; in fact, for the Fang, this life is one continual fight against spirits corporal and spiritual.

A peculiar belief regarding dreams is that when a person sleeps the soul often wanders away, and its experiences on these journeys are made known to the sleeper by dreams. After death the soul may inhabit any kind of animal.

Fetish Biang (medicine).—Fetish means anything; leopard teeth, human finger nails, hair, wood, iron, herbs. The article used as *biang* or fetish, has no intrinsic value, it is only valued because of connecting its owner with a spirit which can aid him. The leopard tooth fetish is supposed to impart the bravery of the leopard to its owner. Fetish is a spirit or combination of spirits manifested in material things.

Dili Mkuk.—To murder a person and save his skull as a fetish, or use the skull as medicine to bring women, guns, goats or goods. The people will make offerings to the skulls calling them by the names of persons killed. It is said that these prayers are always answered as desired.

Biang e Soli (hiding medicine).—A man goes and takes leaves of trees, and cuts them up. He says, "I have cut up leaves of trees" (or high grass, bushes). The women shell gourd seeds and mash them. They catch a fowl, kill it, and put it in the pot. They also put in the pot the medicine leaves, and the mashed gourd kernels. They put the pot on the fire, and boil (its contents). When they have boiled it, the medicine is cooked. They take the medicine pot off (the fire). They go and put it by the side of (*afua*) the back of the *bieti*. The man who has put it there says to the *bieti*, other people want to kill me. He takes away the medicine pot. He opens the *bieti* basket. He takes a small piece of the bone (instead of this say to the woman and children he takes the excrement of the

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

●789 *bieti*). He brings it. He eats the fowl. When finished, he takes a bone of the fowl and the excrement of the *bieti*. He cuts his nails and his hair. He ties (all these things) up in a bundle or packs them inside the horn of a small deer and keeps it.

When a man goes on a journey he carries this medicine with him. Another person cannot see him as he journeys.

This is the *Biang e Soli*.

Biang-nkama.—The people get up and take machetes and cut a clearing. When they have finished the clearing is open and bright. If a man has died and been long in the grave, they take his bones, and lay them out on the ground. They cover them over with earth. They take other bones, and cut them up into small pieces. They put (these pieces) in a basket: they put in also red dye, and scrapings from the bark of trees. They close up the basket. If they go to war, they carry the basket (suspended by a cord from) the shoulder. They take the red dye which is in the basket and smear the body with it. If an enemy (literally, a person) [726] fires a gun (at them), they will not be pierced (by the pieces of iron pot used as bullets).

This is the *Biang-nkama*. Do not tell it to women or children; only to grown real men—for it is tabooed.

Nzake Bukun.—Fang make it thus. If a man makes witch medicine, he kills 754 his brother and other people. They say, let us make *nzake bukun*. They take a corpse, and go with it to the bush. They cut bush. The bush is clear and open. They sweep clear the place which they have cut. They lay down the corpse in the place which they have swept. They dig plenty of dirt, and make it in the shape of an elephant (over the corpse). They make the trunk, the tusks, the eyes, the legs, the tail, the ears. They finish and return to the town. They say, we have made *nzake bukun* (*nzake* means elephant). They say if a man goes out to kill by witchcraft, he will die. If a man wishes to kill another with poison, he will die. If a man lies with a woman in the daytime he will die. Let not a woman eat a pig. And so they say, they have made this fetish, the *nzake-bukun*. When they have done so, if a man lies with a woman in the daytime he gets sick. They go and scrape trees in the bush; they bring water from the river, and put the scrapings in the water. They catch a fowl outside and put it in the medicine-water. They touch the man's body over with the fowl. And so that man, they heal him from his fetish-sickness. Then he is well.

This is *Nzake bukun*.

Biang-abationg.—If a man has married two or three women, and loves one, but 832 dislikes the others, the latter feel badly. They make *biang abationg*. When they [514] go to pass their faeces, they take a very small piece of their faeces. They rub off the grease from their skin, and mix this grease with the small piece of dung. They put it (the mixture) on the drying-shelf (over the fire). When it is dry they mash it to powder, and put it in the neck of a gourd. They take also a shrub called *abatok* (known only by women) and put it in a small gourd (not the neck of

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

832 584 583 gives him (the father) the *beki* (dowry). The father of the young virgin takes the goods to his town; the young man remains in possession of the woman.

They marry with *biang-ndoma*, eloping medicine thus.

This is *Biang-ndoma*.

721 ●789 *Biang-akong* (war medicine).—Told me by Fam-deu, a Fang, Esisis clan, at Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 19th, 1898. This *biang* was illustrated to me; a leopard tooth is the *Biang-akong*.

Make a bowl of war medicine, of leaves, roots, and bark. Call all people of the town. Drop the leopard tooth into the medicine. If the point of the tooth *looks* toward the people we have a palaver (trouble) with, then we must go and fight and we will win. If the root of the tooth points toward the people we have a palaver with, then we must *tabe si* (sit down) or our enemies will win if we go to fight them.

This is the *Biang-akong*.

789 619 622 *Biang-akamayong*.—This *biang* is the protector of the tribe or nation (*ayóng*, tribe).

Told me by Esôya-ôvum, the headman of Foulabifong on the Nkomo river, who sold me the complete set of the *Biang-akamayong* belonging to the dead headman "Commisan." I present this *biang* for your inspection this evening. The tin canister was obtained from a white man and is used in place of the usual basket to carry bones in. It contains portions of the skull of an albino (male), portions of the skull of a *mon nguri*, young chimpanzee, red powder and a variety of native medicine.

[726] [534] This *biang-akamayong* is always carried by the headman of a town during war. A bell hangs from the bottom of the canister containing the bones; it rings when the headman walks.

Nko.—The small horn belonging to the *biang-akamayong* has *ngom* (porcupine tail) in it; also native medicine. It is used to cure people having witches. A bowl of medicine is made. The *ngom* is dipped in the medicine bowl and the sick person sprinkled with the medicine. Then the witch departs.

At this point the headman Esôya stopped talking. He said, "The children who have gathered around your house must go away; no real man dare talk about the *biang-akamayong* before women and children." I told the children to go and Esôya continued.

The whistle.—This is part of the *biang-akamayong*; it has been cooked (boiled) in the medicine bowl and has great power when used by the headman in calling the men together after a fight.

789 619 *Moul.*—This is the large horn with a piece of looking glass on top. This horn contains much medicine, and next to the bones is the most important part of the *biang-akamayong*.

The two small antelope horns, and the small bundles of medicine, are *biang e soli* (hiding medicine); it makes the person carrying the *biang-akamayong* invisible to the enemy.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

The skin of a bush cat is part of the *biang-akamayong* called "Nsin." 789

The Mvang.—A triangular piece of iron filled with medicine, used to keep away witches, is also part of the *biang-akamayong.* 619

Biang-akong or *biang-abal* (war medicine).—This is also part of the *biang-akamayong,* and the shots from the guns of an enemy are of no avail.

One other important fetish hangs with the *biang-akamayong.*

A piece of very hard wood. Only a certain kind of woman is selected to find this wood; she is called a special or *selected* woman on account of certain peculiarities connected with her, *e.g.*, she always fails to catch fish, she may try all day but will not succeed in catching fish. The husband of such a woman, after intercourse with her, fails to catch fish the next day, he also fails to work. This is the kind of woman always selected to find this wood; it is hard wood, she is a hard woman, and she is called *Emuniega ane alert* (the woman who is hard). This medicine is also called *biang-akong,* and shot from the guns of an enemy will not harm. [777] [824]

This is the *Biang-akamayong.*

XIII.—*Witchcraft. Evus.* (*Witch.*)

If a person goes out to make witch (witch medicine, or play witch to harm others) he dies. The people take him to the backyard. Other people say, "We want to take the witch." If the corpse is a female, they open the belly. If the corpse is a male, they open the heart. They see the witch, they take it. If they bring the witch, they lay it on the smoke shelf. It dries. When finished drying they say, "We will use it as medicine." 754

This is *Evus* (witch).

Cursing dead Relations.—Written at Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 13th, 1898. Told me by Ôvôn; fully confirmed by Ogandaga and Interpreter Roby.

E'kanesong (to curse dead relations).—This is a Fang custom. A man has a palaver with another, or goods stolen. He desires to get even with the thief. He calls a friend and curses his friend's dead relations, saying, 754 578 626

"Go and kill that person for me, or go and make him pay me goods; if you do so, I will then pay you for having cursed your dead relations." It is a serious matter to have dead relations cursed, and the friend feels very bad. He must do as bid, or he is branded as a coward, and after he has completed his task he then makes claim for payment.

Nge me bā jam dili, nge me ta minbin (If I do it, may I see the corpses [of my people]). A Fang way of swearing an oath. [539

Ami ye mimbim mia, yinga me bat (My friend, by the corpses of your relations, kill those people for me).

Notes on *Ebômeda* (a curse).

Ilong s'ayoge (a curse that kills).

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

[787] 726 539 789

Ngang (Doctor). Translation.

The Ngang (witch doctor) prophesies war. If the war comes and is in the bush, then the doctor takes medicine wrapped in bush cat skin called *mebup*, and medicine in horns. He holds the horns in his hands. He counts the horns; he hangs the *mebup*. He says to the *mebup*, I say thus: No person must go to the forest. If a person goes anywhere the enemy will kill him. If a person says, I will not listen to the doctors' talk, I will go and do my work; then if he goes, the enemy kill him. If they kill a person, they take the heart and put it in the *abup*. They take an old witch and put it in the *abup*. Then if the doctor prophesies, the witch speaks from inside the medicine. The heart of the person, it talks.

XVI.—*Hunting Traps.*

224

The Fang are skilful hunters, but they justly give the credit of the chase to the *Nqui* (dwarfs). I have been told that a dwarf will go hunting in the bush and return with meat after a hunting party has returned unsuccessful from the same locality; the dwarfs have great patience. If while hunting in the forest a man sees a deer, he shouts for assistance: others come and help hunt. If the deer is killed, all claim a share, after one-third has been given to the man who first sighted the game. This is the custom when a man walking unarmed in the forest sights meat, and calls for aid. Meat killed by a regular hunting party is carried to their town and divided. Dogs are used to hunt game, the dogs wear wooden bells around the neck, sometimes the bells are made of iron. Flint-lock guns are used when hunting. Before a hunting party starts out it is the custom to make *biang nzali* (gun medicine), and to place the guns in it; this makes them shoot straight. The natives imitate very cleverly the calls of certain animals and birds for the purpose of decoy. Occasionally they drive game into an enclosure called *olam*. Spears are seldom used in the chase. The crossbow is used for shooting birds and small bush cats.

[441]

Poisoned arrows are not used with the crossbow. Pitfalls for game are dug and covered with small branches and leaves; pigs and small deer frequently fall into them. A Fang never attempts to hit a bird on the wing. In firing the flint-locks the gun is not carried to the shoulder, but held by the stock in front of the body, the butt being on a level with the waist. Game laws are unknown.

After a successful hunting expedition the whole town indulges in a feast, men, women, and children eat until gorged; after a period of rest dancing commences and is kept up throughout the night.

Olam (Trap). Translation.

224 539

They take small trees and bamboo leaves and bush rope, and make a long fence. They leave holes for the traps and holes for the pitfalls (*i.e.*, opposite the